Cedar River Instream Flow Commission
Final Minutes

SPU Water Quality Lab

June 3rd, 2009

Organizations/Members Present:
- Seattle Public Utilities (Tom Fox, Karl Burton, Rand Little)
- King County Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks (Steve Hirschey)
- Muckleshoot Tribe (Holly Coccoli by phone)
- Seattle City Light (Liz Ablow)
- Washington Department of Ecology (Jay Cook)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Larry Schick, Lynne Melder)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Tim Romanski)
- NOAA Fisheries (Jim Muck)

I. Call to Order: Tom Fox called the meeting to order at 9:40 AM.

II. Approval of Agenda: Approved as presented.

III. Approval of Draft Minutes: Jay and Holly wanted the discussion regarding job losses and funding cuts in May's meeting minutes to be modified. The minutes were changed to reflect the requested modifications and then the minutes were finalized.

IV. News and Notes: Tom informed the IFC that Landsburg forebay cleaning is tentatively scheduled for next week with fish removal operations likely to occur on Tuesday. The final plan will be released on Friday.

Steve announced that the American Water Resources Association will be having their national annual meeting in Seattle next fall. Steve said that he had submitted an abstract for a paper detailing King County's perspective on instream flow management.

Larry reported that the Corps had recently started testing the Howard Hansen Dam to determine if the sinkholes have created any significant structural problems for the dam. Currently, the Howard Hansen Reservoir is at 1163' in elevation. When the elevation was at 1157' the Corps had a team of experts examine the dam for 4 days before filling higher after determining that there was not a detectable problem with the dam at that elevation. The plan is to fill

to elevation 1167' and then test again for 4 days. The Corps may fill above 1167' but that will be determined after the results of testing at 1167' are available. Larry said that an elevation of 1200' is flood capacity for Howard Hansen. Larry alerted the IFC that, if the testing uncovers a problem, the Corps may have to drawdown the reservoir, limiting the available water supply.

V. Real Time Water Management

Hydrologic Conditions for Tolt and Cedar: Chester Morse Reservoir has filled to 1562.8', 0.2' away from the refill target of 1563', which SPU will easily meet. On Sunday, SPU will reduce releases to approximately 600 cfs in preparation for the forebay cleaning scheduled for next week. Inflows to Cheater Morse Reservoir are approaching the ninetieth percentile as snowmelt has increased substantially since May. The S. Fork Tolt Reservoir is currently almost full at elevation 1764.5'. SPU expects the reservoir to fill and then spill between 40 and 80 cfs given that inflows are currently at the ninetieth percentile. A substantial portion of the snowpack has melted in both watersheds. Snowpack is approaching average levels for this time of year. Instream flows in the Cedar River are currently running at approximately 900 cfs below Landsburg and 1000 cfs at Renton. Estimated unregulated flows have begun to be consistently higher than actual flows reflecting the refill operations to capture snowmelt. Tom pointed out the pattern of delayed regulated freshets in comparison to the estimated natural freshets.

Liz reviewed recent downramping operations and stated that all have been in compliance at both the 12116400 and 12116500 gages.

M& I demand was 169 MGD on Tuesday June 2nd which is pretty high for this time of year, reflecting the unusually warm and dry weather. SEAFM model runs forecast a pool split in September and a good water supply for this summer.

Lake Washington: The fish screen for the saltwater drain is now operational after annual cleaning and some minor fixes to cover gaps between the screen and the drain culvert were completed. The downstream end of the saltwater drain has been automated to close when tides reach 6.5'. The fish ladder will be operational tomorrow after maintenance and cleaning are completed. Lake Washington's elevation is now at 21.85' and filling. Lake elevation should be up to 21.90' tomorrow and will fill to 21.95' by next week. The Corps intends on keeping the Lake full as long as possible in order to maintain the flow going through the smolt flumes as late into the summer as possible.

***Fish Update*:** Karl mentioned that the spring redd survey crew had identified 53 trout redds and no steelhead redds to date. Although there will be one more full river survey, Karl expects 2009 to be the first year on record where no steelhead redds have been observed in the Cedar River. Based on fish length

estimates for spring migrants passing through the Landsburg Dam fish passage, there have been approximately 3 steelhead that moved above the dam in 2009. Rand reported that Kelly Kiyohara's estimate for sockeye fry outmigration has dropped to less than the 2 million fry figure provided earlier. The later part of the sockeye outmigrant population did not materialize as expected. Chinook outmigrants are also relatively low with an estimate of just under 100,000 fry through early May. Substantial numbers of outmigrating Chinook parr have not yet been observed at the traps. Using the past apparent relationship between spring flow level and percentage of the juvenile Chimook emigrating as parr, we might expect a total parr count of count of 10,000 to 15,000 fish this year.

Rand said that there have been no reports on adult sockeye yet this year. Holly reported that counts at the Locks will start soon.

Forecasts and Water Supply Outlook: Larry reported that the short-term forecast calls for a very warm, dry Wednesday and Thursday followed by cooling on Friday but remaining dry through the weekend. Sunday there is the possibility of mountain showers and maybe light showers in the lowlands on Monday or Tuesday. The extended forecast calls for a dry pattern with no tendencies towards above or below normal precipitation. In regards to the ENSO, a neutral pattern is predicted through next winter.

VI. Supplemental Summer Block Allocation: Rand began by stating SPU was offering the non-firm block of supplemental water for allocation in water year 2009. Rand handed out the packet showing the vulnerability of trout redds to dewatering in 2009. There were 8 trout redds that were predicted to be vulnerable to dewatering under the HCP summer minimum instream flow regime. There were no observed steelhead redds in 2009. One of the vulnerable trout redds needed supplemental flow above and beyond the minimum flow regime but part of that redd's incubation period fell outside the allocation period for supplemental blocks of water. SPU will voluntarily protect this redd. Using the predicted minimum flow to keep each redd inundated and the predicted end of emergence estimates for each vulnerable redd, Rand created a suggested supplemental guaranteed flow regime (Option 1) that allocated as much water as allowed late in the supplemental period while also protecting all trout redds from dewatering. This allocation option also downramped slowly to summer baseflows. Other flow allocation alternatives included a regime that protected all but one vulnerable redd and a regime that protected all but two vulnerable redds. The IFC opted to protect all vulnerable trout redds and to accept the suggested firm and non-firm block allocation (Option 1).

Steve asked how SPU was doing to meet compliance with the HCP requirement to offer the non-firm block in 63% of water years. Rand

responded that SPU had offered the non-firm block in about 80% of years since 2000.

Rand presented the options for recovery of the non-firm block if normal rainfall patterns do not materialize in the fall. If hydrologic conditions worsen substantially by the fall, the IFC has the option of using the pump plants to recover the water or to decrease minimum flows. Tom said that the pump plants need maintenance on necessary electrical cables before they can be used. SPU is developing a plan to fix the wire and cables that extend to the pump plant platforms but a fix is not definite by fall. The IFC decided that they would prefer to use the pump plants but if they are not available then a further discussion should take place at a later date. Tom said SPU will know whether the pump plants will be available by the end of June. Jay asked Tom when the permanent pump plants will be built and Tom responded that the construction timeline has been delayed by 1 year due to budget challenges associated with the recession.

VII. Supplemental Studies

Adaptive Management Program Conceptual Model for Peak Flow Study: Rand passed out a revised copy of the peak flow management study summary scope authored by Chris Magirl. Chris is moving forward with the scoping document and may present his ideas at the AWRA conference in November.

Jim asked if there was sufficient funding to support all of the work in the scope. Rand replied that the work can be viewed as a phased project. The first phase is outlined by the scope and we hopefully have sufficient funding for this phase. The second phase would entail implementation of the monitoring plan and decision making framework established by the first phase. Funding for this phase is currently uncertain.

After much discussion regarding the differences between biological and physical attributes that can be measured in the study, the IFC added "creation of overwintering habitat" to the Riverine Habitat box and "redd distribution" and "riparian vegetation" response to the Biological Responses box in the conceptual model.

VIII. Walsh Lake Diversion Ditch Discussion: The January storm event caused the Walsh Ditch levee to fail and redirected Walsh Lake outlet flow (Walsh Creek) back into Rock Creek. The City recently completed a technical analysis of restoring Walsh Creek flows to Rock Creek. For the near future, the City does not intend to re-route Walsh Creek back into the ditch. Prior to this event, the flow in Walsh Ditch entered the river just downstream of the instream flow compliance point (USGS gage #12117600). Therefore, the river below Walsh Ditch received the ditch flows plus the guaranteed instream flows. Now the water flowing out of Walsh Lake enters the Cedar well above the compliance

point and therefore serves to help meet the guaranteed flow requirements rather than add to them. To maintain the integrity of flows in the river, the guaranteed flow regime may need to be adjusted upward by an amount approximately equivalent to the flow in the Walsh Lake outlet just above the confluence with Rock Creek.

Rand distributed the packet (also provided at the May meeting) describing recommendations to the IFC regarding increases to the guaranteed flow regime to compensate for the altered volume inputs to Walsh Lake Ditch (WLD) and the Cedar River below the confluence of WLD. Rand said that, until a final decision was made by SPU about the permanent hydrologic configuration of Walsh Creek, any minimum flow decision or action by the IFC would be considered interim. If the configuration stays with Walsh Creek flowing into Rock Creek, we may need to pursue a more formal revision of the IFA guaranteed instream flow requirements.

Rand requested that the IFC consider whether or not to support the proposed interim adjustment in the guaranteed flow regime. A timely decision is necessary since flows will soon be receding to the guaranteed levels. Holly said she likes the interim idea but her colleague Carla Carlson would like some time to review the proposal. Rand said he'd be happy to answer any questions Carla may have. Tim said he is very supportive of the idea to keep Walsh Creek flowing into Rock Creek and Holly concurred. Steve said that, at the present time, it is unclear what position the County will take on the overall issue but he supports the idea of an interim flow regime that compensates for the re-direction of Walsh Ditch flows.

There was some concern about using modeled flows for the interim regime and Rand said that the new flow regime was based on nine years of modeled flow but actual flows could be measured for a period after the interim measure to make sure the model is sufficiently well calibrated. The IFC agreed to go ahead with the interim plan. Rand said he would talk with Brent Lackey (SPU) regarding a potential flow monitoring program for model calibration. Tim said that the USFWS would like a timeframe for making the final decision regarding re-routing Walsh Creek into the ditch or not. The USFWS also would like to see a plan for closing and re-vegetating the road next to the ditch.

IX. Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Tom proposed that the IFC consider cancelling the July IFC meeting due to vacations and other planned absences by IFC members. The IFC agreed but Steve asked for an update in July regarding the decision to move forward to fix the electrical cables at the pump plant.

Items for August 5 meeting;

1) Discussion of IHA Study
2) Peak flow AMP scope.

X. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM